

THE HEAVENLY RAINBOW

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A SERMON

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“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”
Revelation 4:3

“A RAINBOW!” “A rainbow around about the throne!” I have a notion concerning this rainbow, that it was a complete circle. In the tenth chapter the apostle tells us that he saw “another mighty angel with a rainbow upon his head,” which could hardly have been the semi-circular arc we are accustomed to see in the sky in times of rain and sunshine. It must have been, I should imagine, a complete ring.

I stood, two years ago, on the little wooden bridge in the village of Handeck, on the Swiss side of the Grimsel Pass, and looked down upon the roaring torrent beneath. The waterfall, breaking itself upon enormous rocks, cast up showers of foam and spray. As I looked down, the sun shone upon it, and I saw a rainbow, such as I had never seen but once before in another place upon a similar occasion. It was a complete circle around the fall, then another one, and within it a third—three wheels within wheels, consisting of all the delightful colors of the rainbow, from the timid violet up to the courageous red.

There was no mistake about it. They were complete rings that seemed to go right round the torrent, like great belts of sapphires, and emeralds, and chalcedonies. The ring was trebled as it shone before me. I stood and wondered at the sight. Then these very texts came to my mind, “a rainbow around about the throne,” and “I saw a mighty angel, who had a rainbow upon his head.”

It seems to me that John had such a sight before him—a rainbow which entirely surrounded the throne. If it be so, I shall not, I think, be accounted fanciful if I draw a moral. *In this world we only see, for it is all we can see, one-half of the eternal covenant of God’s grace.* That one upward arch of divine masonry is all that we see here. The other downward half, on which the one which we see rests, namely, the eternal decree, the purpose, the resolve of infinite sovereignty—that is out of sight as yet. We cannot discern it. Earth comes between the horizon and bounds it. But when we shall get up yonder, and see things as they are, and know even as we are known, then the covenant will be seen by us to be a complete circle, an harmonious whole, not a broken thing, not a broken arc, or a semi-circle, as it seems to be now, but like deity itself, perpetual, everlasting, complete, perfect, eternal.

It may be true to the figure, it certainly will be so in fact. What we know not now we shall know hereafter, and possibly this very emblem is here used to set forth to us that, while we see the glory which God has made manifest, we do not, and cannot at present, see the eternal purpose itself, except so far as we judge of it from its grand results.

Oh! it is delightful to think of going up yonder if for nothing else than knowing more of Christ, understanding more of divine love, drinking deeper into the mystery of godliness through which God was manifest in the flesh. Surely, if we know but little, that little knowledge has set us thirsting for deeper draughts, and we are waiting for the time when we shall drop the veil which parts us from spiritual realities, and shall see them face to face, needing no longer to view them as in a glass, reflected darkly.

I want you to notice three things which these words suggest, “There was a rainbow around about the throne.” First—*divine sovereignty never oversteps the bounds of the covenant, but is rainbow-hedged, with a wall of fire around about the throne.* In the second place—*divine government springing from sovereignty, the throne is always regulated by the covenant, there is respect at all times to the covenant of grace in everything that JEHOVAH does.* Thirdly—in the covenant of grace the predominant quality

is grace, “it was in sight like unto an emerald,” which I will further explain indicates that loving kindness and tender mercy towards men ever shine radiant in the covenant.

First, then, “there was a rainbow round about the throne.”

I. DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY NEVER OVERSTEPS THE BOUNDS OF THE COVENANT.

“There was a rainbow round about the throne”—as though the rainbow hedged the throne, belted it, girt it round about. God’s sovereignty must, of necessity, be absolute and unlimited. He made everything, and as nothing existed before God, or independent of God, He had a right to make what He pleased, and to make all that He did make just after His own will and pleasure. And when He has made, His rights do not terminate, but He still continues to have an altogether unlimited and absolute power over the creatures of His hands. He claims the right for Himself. “Hath not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?”

God has the power to create, and the power afterwards to use that which is created for the purpose for which He has made it. “Shall I not do what I will with mine own?” is a question which the Almighty may well ask of all His creatures who would dare to bring Him to their bar, and blasphemously re-judge His judgment, snatch from His hands the balance and the rod, and seek to set themselves up as censors of the Holy One.

Whenever men say, “How can God do this?” and “How shall He do that?” it should always content us to answer, “Nay, O man, but who art thou that repliest against God?” for whether we will have it or not, still God has said it, and He will stand to it. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”—so then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

But as one truth is always to be taken in its relation to another truth, and not to be isolated from its natural kindred, it is a delightful consideration that God, in His absolute sovereignty, never does violence to any of His other attributes, and *above all, never does violence to the covenant*. The covenant still surrounds the sovereignty, and practically hedges it within its bounds.

God is practically, as far as we are concerned, bound by His own revelation of His own character. He has been pleased to tell us that He is just, and that He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious. In a few words, He has given us the sum of Himself by saying that “God is love.” When a man says concerning himself, “I have a right to do as I like, but I am generous as well as just,” you feel sure he will exercise the right which he claims in a manner according to, and consistent with, his own statement of what he is, and if he has rightly estimated his own character, he will give bountifully and pay honorably.

Rest assured, then, that God’s sovereignty never will prove Him to have misrepresented Himself, or to have deceived us. When He says that He is just, He neither can nor will act unjustly towards any creature He has made. There was never a pang or a pain inflicted arbitrarily by God. God never pronounced a curse upon any man unless that man had clearly and richly earned it by his sin. No soul was ever cast into hell by sovereignty. God takes counsel with Himself, but He stoops not to caprice.

How comes the hapless creature, then, to this dread torment? Sin brings the sinner into a ruined state, justice pronounces the sinner’s doom. Sovereignty may let that doom stand. What if it moves not to avert the issue. Justice it is that pronounces the curse. Be assured, man, however much you may kick against the doctrine of election, you have no reason to do so. Whatever that doctrine may involve, it is not possible but that God must, and will, act towards you in a way so strictly just that, when you yourself come to discover it in eternity, you will not be able to cavil, but be compelled to stand speechless. Moreover, God has been pleased to assure you that He is love, that He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Now, whatever sovereignty may decree, you may rest assured that the decree will be in consonance with the fact that God is full of mercy, grace, and truth. I know some of you set up the decree of God like a huge monster before you. You paint a horrible picture, as though the visage of Him that speaks to

you from heaven were cruel and pitiless. But that picture is drawn by your perverse imagination, it is not God's portrait of Himself, for He says, "As I live, saith the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he would turn unto me and live." God mocks not when He says, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

That is honest emotion which God feels over a sinner who ruins himself when He cries, "How shall I give thee up...how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together"! God wills not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he should turn unto Him and live. So He Himself assures us, and sovereign as He is, yet He still remains both just and gracious forever, and let us not doubt it for a moment. The rainbow, the rainbow of His own glorious attributes of mercy, ever surrounds the throne.

It is equally certain, taking another view of this subject, that *God's sovereignty never can by any possibility run counter to the promise which He Himself has made.* God has a right to do as He wills with His own, but when He once, in His sovereignty, chooses to make a promise, He would be unfaithful if He does not keep it, and it is not possible that He can be unfaithful, for none of His words ever did fail, or ever shall. He has been true to the very jots and tittles of all that He has Himself declared.

Never in any case has any man been able to say that God has spoken in secret, and said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face," in vain. I want every unconverted person here to be careful to note this truth. Whenever you find a promise in God's Word, do not let the thought of predestination scare you from it. Predestination can never be contrary to the promise. It is not in election, or reprobation, or in any doctrine that asserts divine sovereignty to make the promise of God to be of none effect.

Take a promise like this—"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." If you believe, and if you are baptized, you have, then, God's Word for it—you shall be saved. Be sure of it, that stands fast. Heaven and earth may pass away, but that Word shall not fail you. God will keep His Word of truth with you, and at the last tremendous day you shall find that since you believe, God will save you.

Take another, "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Then, if you call upon the name of the Lord, that is, if with hearty, earnest prayer, you cry to God, and if with your whole soul you take Him to be your all in all, calling upon His name as the heathens do upon their gods, when they avow themselves to be their followers—if you do this, you shall be saved.

Now, I beseech you, remember that no decree can possibly run counter to this. You say, "What if the decree shall destroy me!" Man, His promise is the decree. The promise of God is His eternal purpose, written out in black and white for you to read. So far from the counsel of eternity being contrary to the revelation in time, the revelation in time is nothing more than a transcript of what God resolved to do from before the foundation of the world.

Take any promise you will. Let it be this, if the others seem to miss you—"Come now, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool." Now, your sins *are* as scarlet, and you *are* willing to come and reason with God, and you find that when He reasons with you, He tells you that you must rest in the blood of Jesus, leave your sins, and depend wholly upon Christ. Well, now, after you have so done, you have God's Word for it that those scarlet sins of yours shall be "whiter than snow." Well then, they must be so. It is not possible that anything unknown to you should come in and make void the promise which is known.

I will read again that verse I just mentioned, "He has never spoken in secret, and said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain." God has not said behind your back what He has not said to your face. He has said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He has said, "Oh! ye thirsty, come and drink." He has said, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

There is nothing in that mysterious roll, which no human eye has ever seen, that can be in conflict with the golden promises which gleam in the book of God's Word upon every needy sinner that comes and trusts in the Lord. There is a rainbow round about the throne. Sovereignty never gets out of the circle of the promise.

Oh! child of God! Your heavenly Father, in His sovereignty, *has a right to do with you, His child, as He pleases, but He will never let that sovereignty get out of the limit of the covenant.* As a sovereign, He might cast you away, but He has promised that He never will, and never will He. As a sovereign, He might leave you to perish, but He has said, “I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.”

As a sovereign, He might suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength, but He has promised that no temptation shall happen to you, but such as is common to man, and He will with the temptation make a way of escape. Let no dark thought ever cross your mind that, perhaps, towards you He will deal arbitrarily. It is not so. He will carry out His purpose to you, and of that purpose He has already informed you by telling you that you are His, His adopted child, and you shall be His forever and ever.

In the second place—

II. THE RULING GOVERNMENT OF GOD IN THE WORLD ALWAYS HAS RESPECT TO THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

It is so in great things. He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. When you read God’s Word, Egypt comes upon the stage—Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome. Yet what are they but a sort of background? They come and they go, for all their secular grandeur as mere accessories. The central figure is always the election of grace, the people of God, for the rest, they are merely the ploughmen and the vinedressers for the Lord’s own people. Sometimes these nations are nursing fathers. At other times they are sharp rods, whichever they may be, they are mere instruments.

The Bible speaks of them as so much scaffolding for the building of the living temple in which the mercy of God shall be displayed. Whenever you read, or hear people talk about prophecy, you may depend upon it that inspiration has not been given to tell of Louis Napoleon, or any other earthly sovereign. It is not the history of Prussia, Russia, or France, that the heavenly apocalypse unveils. The whole Book is written for His people, it gives us the history of the church, but it does not give us the history of anything else.

The way to read the Book, if you do read it, is with this central thought in your minds, that God has not revealed to us anything concerning Assyria, Babylon, Greece, or Rome for their own sakes, but He has referred to them because they happen to have a connection with the history of His church. That is all, for He has chosen Jacob to Himself, and Israel to be His peculiar treasure.

My brethren, I believe that when kings and potentates meet in the cabinet chamber and consult together according to their ambition, a Counselor whom they never see pulls the strings, and they are only His puppets, and even when armies meet in battle array, when the world seems shaken to and fro with revolutions, and the most stable thrones quiver, as though they were but vessels out at sea, there is a secret force working in all. The end and drift of these momentous actions is the bringing out of the chosen race, the salvation of the blood-bought company, and the glory of God in the redeeming of the world unto Himself.

When you read the newspaper, read it to see how your heavenly Father is managing the world for the good of His own children. All else, be it the disposal of a throne, the settlement of a political question, or the winning of a boat race, are minor things compared with the interests of the election of grace. All things are revolving and cooperating for good. They are working together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to the purpose of His grace. By them He will make manifest throughout the ages unto the angels and the principalities, His manifold wisdom.

Now, as this is the case in the great, *it is equally so in the little.* In all your smaller affairs God always governs with respect to the covenant. Your worst afflictions are still meant for your good, for this is one clause in the covenant, “Surely in blessing, I will bless.” When you come to the worst, even should that happen to be at the close of life, you will find that God has still kept within covenant engagements.

Hear what David said upon his bed of pain, “Although my house be not so with God, yet”—oh! gracious “yet”—“yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” You have lost your property, it is a sad thing for you to come down in the world, but this always was in

the covenant. Have you never read it? “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Lately, when you have been in prayer, you have had but little comfort, and when you have read the Word of God, it has not seemed to gleam with delight to you, but rather the Book has seemed dark. Well, well, that is in the covenant. Did I not read it to you? “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.”

Perhaps you have been backsliding. It is sad that it should be so, and now you have lost much of your enjoyment, and you are exceedingly cast down. But did you never read it, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways”? Do you not know it to be a promise from God—really a promise? “If his children err from my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod; nevertheless, my covenant will I not take away from him, nor suffer my loving-kindness to fail”? You are only receiving now what God has promised to give to you.

Look upon these things as tokens that God is faithful. We are told in the covenant God made with Noah, that “seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, shall never cease.” Now, the snow has fallen today, and it is bitterly cold, but my brethren, it was in the covenant that the winter should not cease. No doubt, when the harvest comes, and the summer laughs with joy, we shall say, “How good God is, and how true He has been to His covenant, that there should be a harvest and a summer!” Ah! but when the seed is cast into the cold soil, and the frost covers it, you ought to be equally grateful to the faithfulness of God, for this is one part of the promise. If He did not keep one part, you might be afraid that He would not keep the other.

Just so is it spiritually. Your troubles are promised to you. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” You have got your troubles. “As many as he loves he chastens.” You have got the chastening. Be, therefore, thankful that you have another proof of the divine faithfulness towards you. There is a rainbow round about the throne, and let the throne decree what it may, the scepter is never stretched beyond the boundary of covenant love. It is impossible for God to deal towards His people contrary to the spirit which breathes in the two immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie, and by which He has given strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to the hope which is set before them in the Gospel.

Our third point is that—

III. IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE, REPRESENTED BY THE CIRCULAR RAINBOW, LOVE AND GRACE ARE ALWAYS CONSPICUOUS.

The emerald, with its green color, is always taken to represent this green earth and the things which concern the dwellers therein, and it has always been viewed as a type of mercy. It is a soft and gentle color, the most agreeable to the eye of all the colors, the vibrations of light caused by it being found to be more suitable to the optic nerve than the vibrations of any other color. Scarlet, and such bright colors, the emblems of justice and vengeance, would soon destroy the eye, and white, the emblem of purity, cannot long be endured.

Those of us who have crossed lofty mountains covered with snow have had to suffer as long as we have been there from snow blindness. The human eye would soon cease to perform its functions if the earth were long covered with snow and if we had nothing to relieve the eye. Green is the color that suits mankind, and it represents the mercy, the tenderness, and the benevolence of God towards mankind.

Whenever you read the covenant, read it in the light of the emerald. I have sometimes thought that some of my brethren read it in another light. I think I have heard prayers which, if translated into plain English, would run something like this, “Lord, we thank You that we are elected. We bless You that we are in the covenant. We bless Your name that You are sending sinners down to hell, cutting them off and destroying them, but we are saved!”

I have sometimes thought I have caught in such prayers an air of complacency in the damnation of sinners, and even a little more than that—I have fancied I have seen in certain hyper-Calvinists a sort of Red Indian scalping knife propensity, an ogre-like feeling with respect to reprobation, a smacking of lips

over the ruin and destruction of mankind, as to all of which, I can only say that it seems to me to be “earthly, sensual, devilish.”

I cannot imagine a man, especially a man who has the spirit of Christ in him, thinking of the ruin of mankind with any other feeling than that which moved the soul of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem, crying, “How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!” Let no one imagine that the spirit of Calvinism is a spirit of hostility to universal humanity. It is not so. It is a perversion and a caricature of the expositions of Calvin and Augustine, and of the apostle Paul, and of what our Master preached, to represent us as thinking with complacency of the ruin of any one of the human race.

My brethren, when I have sometimes heard statements made about the fewness of those who will be saved at the last, I have thought that surely the rainbow round about the throne of the God whom such people worshipped must have been scarlet in color. It could not have been “in sight like unto an emerald.” There must have been a predominance of vengeance in it and not of mercy. Why, I firmly believe that at the last, it will be found that there are more in heaven than in hell, for when the great winding up of the drama shall come, Christ will in all things have the preeminence.

Now, alas! there be few that find the narrow road, while broad is the gate of hell, and many there be that go in thereat. We are in the minority now, but when I think of the countless hosts of little children, elect of God, who have gone from their mother’s breasts to glory, not having passed through actual sin, but being bought with precious blood, I can see a vast multitude that belongs to Christ.

And when I look forward to that brighter age, when the nations shall flock to the feet of Christ, and tens of thousands and hundreds of millions shall sing His praises from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, I rejoice to think that then the Lord Jesus Christ will see of the travail of His soul, and will be satisfied, and it is not a little that will satisfy Him.

I have sometimes thought with a certain good divine, that when the King comes to end His reign, there will be found no more in prison, in comparison with the great number of His creatures, than in any well-ordered government there will be of persons convicted of crime compared with the population. At any rate, let us hope so. We have no right to speak positively where we have no positive declaration, but it is significant that there is always a prominence given in Scripture to the grace, the mercy, the goodness, and the loving-kindness of God.

Surely Scripture would not tell us this unless it would also seem to be so in the universal providence of God. I believe that in the rainbow, the emerald will be the most conspicuous, and that grace will be “in heaven the topmost stone,” for it “well deserves the praise.”

And now, in conclusion, my dear friends—

IV. LET ME MAKE ONE OR TWO PRACTICAL REMARKS.

Let me exhort you all *to understand the covenant, of which the rainbow is the symbol*. I am sorry to say that there are many professors who do not know what the covenant means. I have been told that there are pulpits where the word “covenant” is scarcely ever mentioned, so that the congregation really do not know what the covenant of grace means.

Now, the old Scotch divines, and our own Puritan forefathers, were of opinion that the two covenants are the very essence of all theology. When a man gets a clear view of the covenant of works, sees how it was made with Adam, and broken, and how it involved our ruin, and then gets a clear view of the covenant of grace made with the Second Adam, the conditions of which are all fulfilled by Him, so that the covenant cannot be broken by us, and all the provisions of that covenant are made sure by His having fulfilled His suretyship and sponsorship on our behalf, when a man gets a hold of these two things, why, he cannot be an Arminian.

It is impossible, but he must keep pretty near to those grand old doctrines which we call the doctrines of grace. If any man says to me, “What is the one thing which I have to learn to be a sound preacher of the Gospel?” I think I should say, “Learn to distinguish between the covenant of Hagar, which is Sinai in Arabia, and the covenant of Sarah, which is the covenant of the New Jerusalem, which

is of promise, the distinction between works and grace, between debt and gift, between the works of the law and the abounding loving-kindness of the Lord our Lord.”

May I ask young members of the church to read the Scriptures upon this point, and to ask their older friends to instruct them in the matter of the covenant? It is such an important point, that I would press it very earnestly. I hope you do not wish to go to heaven like those of whom the Savior speaks, and who enter into life halt, or maimed, or having but one eye. Oh! no, but seek to clear away ignorance. That the soul be without knowledge is not good. Get a clear view of these things, for by so doing you will be comforted, you will be strengthened, you will be sanctified.

But *if you do understand the covenant, have a constant regard to it.* There is a sweet prayer, “Have respect unto thy covenant.” We pray that to God. Well, He does have respect to the covenant. He has the symbol of it all round His throne. He cannot look anywhere without looking through His covenant. He sees us, He sees the world, He sees all things through that rainbow which is round about the throne. He sees all human affairs through the medium of the great Mediator, the Covenant Angel, the Lord Jesus.

Well now, what you ask God to do, and what He does, do for yourselves. Have respect unto the covenant. Do you ever think of the covenant? Some, I am afraid, do not think of it by the month together, and yet the covenant—oh! brethren, it is a casket full of wealth! it is a fountain full of crystal streams, it is the heaven out of which the manna falls, it is the rock out of which the living waters flow—the Rock Christ, who is the essence of the covenant to us.

Live upon the covenant in life, and let it claim your last accents in the moment of death. This covenant of grace rejoice in all the day. Live upon the choice morsels which God has laid up in store for you in it. The covenant! The covenant! Oh! keep your hearts, keep your thoughts, keep your eyes constantly thereon.

And oh! *get comfort from the covenant!* Do not merely think of it, but really lay hold upon it. You are in covenant with God. It is not a question with *you*, as a believer in Christ, whether God *may* keep you, and bless you, and cause His face to shine upon you. He *will* do so, He cannot do otherwise, if I may use such language concerning Him, because, though He is free, yet He has bound Himself by His promise, He has bound Himself by His oath, He has put Himself within the limit of the rainbow, and out of that He cannot, and will not, go. It encircles His throne and Himself.

You may go up to His throne humbly, but still go there with boldness. You do not come like a common beggar. You do not knock at the door as a man does at your door, a chance beggar asking for charity. You have got a promise. Come, then, as a man goes into the bank who has got a bank-bill that is sighted, and now the day is come for it to be paid. Go to God, making mention of the name of Jesus, with the humble boldness with which a child asks of its own loving parent what that parent has often promised to bestow. Let the comfort of the covenant be yours continually.

And if you have this comfort, *never, never be so base as to indulge hard thoughts of God.* It is very easy for me to say this to you, but it will not always be so easy for you to practice it. Ah! friends, we think we can take God’s will and be submissive to it, and acquiesce in it, but when it presses hard upon us, then is the proof. When a man gets into the fining pot and the crucible is put into the fire, they will show what faith he has got. Ah! it is hard when you get a heavy stroke, when you are told that such and such a one who is very dear to you will die ere long, or when you know that you yourself have a fatal disease about you, it is hard then to say, “The LORD liveth, and blessed be my rock!” or “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away, and blessed be His name.”

It was admirable in David, that when he began one of his mournful psalms, he knew that he was going to groan a good deal, so he said, “There is one matter we will set right before we get out of trim. Truly God is good to Israel.” That is settled. He puts that down as the first thing when he gets into the box as a witness. He says, “I am confused today, and tumbled up and down in my wits, but before I say anything I ought to say this one thing, I solemnly declare before men, angels, and devils—Truly God is good to Israel! As for me, my feet had well-nigh gone, my steps had almost slipped,” and so on, but he begins with that.

Now, settle that, settle that in your soul. Put that down like an anchor, right deep in the sea. Come winds, come waves, come hurricanes! God is good, God is faithful, God will keep His covenant. Every dark and painful line meets in the center of His love. It must be right. Never let your soul be envious of the wicked when you see their prosperity, but still rejoice in your God, and let Him do as He wills.

If you do know anything about the sweetness of the covenant, when you meet with a poor child of the house of Israel, tell him about it, and as you do not know who he may be, tell everybody about it. There may be one of your brethren with whom you are to live in heaven, sitting next you in the pew. Since I mentioned last Sunday night that there was a young person who had been here for two years, and nobody had ever spoken to her, I have had a letter from a young man to say that he is in the same case.

Oh! dear! You know how I told you on Sunday night that I was ashamed of some of you, but I did not know in which part of the chapel you were, and therefore, as I did not know who it was, I could not be ashamed of you, but get you to be ashamed on your own account. Now, you see, there are two cases, and I am afraid, if we get more testimony, it would go to ever so many places in the Tabernacle. Do not let it be so!

Let each one pluck up heart, and say unto his fellow, "Know the Lord." Let each man say to his neighbor, "Have you tasted the sweetness?" Who finds honey and eats it all? You ought to say, like the Syrian lepers, "This is a day of good tidings; if we tarry here, peradventure mischief will befall us; let us go even into the camp of Israel, and let us tell them of this thing." Spread abroad the good news. Who knows how many you may bring to my Master's footstool, to their salvation, and to your own comfort and joy?

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

REVELATION 18:21-24, 19:1-10

Blessed is he that reads and understands the prophecy of this Book.

We have no difficulty in knowing to what city this great Babylon refers, for the Church of Rome, in the plenitude of its wisdom, has taken the title to itself in attempting to claim that Peter was the first bishop of Rome. They quote the text, "The church that is in Babylon saluteth thee," that church, they say, being the church in Rome. Therefore, Rome is Babylon. Besides, the whole of the eighteenth chapter gives such a description as can only apply to her, and she must, and shall, come to her end.

Revelation Chapter 18. Verses 21-24. *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

Revelation Chapter 19. Verses 1-4. *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen: Alleluia.*

For the overthrow of a monstrous system of error gives delight to all holy spirits, and chiefly to those who stand nearest the eternal throne.

5-6. *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

The harlot church is put away, the true church is introduced, fully arrayed in perfect holiness, ready for the consummation of her own joy, and her master's—her last delight.

7-10. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

If John made a mistake, because the saints in heaven are all so like their Master, it is well that the mistake was at once corrected, for angel worship, or the worship of saints, is to be avoided by all saints. And God's Word about it is, "See thou do it not." It is said that we should certainly pay reverence to holy men that are now with God, but see you do it not. Indeed, here, among men, the same kind of idolatry is sought to be kept up, and the preacher is arrayed in garments to make him distinct from the people, as though he were something better or different from them, and not their fellow servant. But for all this, let us hear the voice which says, "See thou do it not. I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

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